

### ***HHS Grant will fund research on muscle weakness***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) is pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is awarding a \$426,000 Recovery grant to Ohio University in Athens for its research on the Intracortical Mechanisms of Muscle Weakness. The award is being made by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, a division within HHS.

“I’m so proud of the good work being done at Ohio University,” Wilson said. “The money is being used to hire talented researchers and to do valuable medical research. That’s a win-win and is exactly the type of sound investment I expected would be made in our region when I voted for the Recovery Act.”

Brian Clark, Ph.D., assistant professor of physiology at the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-COM), is the principal investigator on the winning project. His research revolves around the question: What causes the loss of muscle strength and reductions in our ability to control our voluntary movements, and can these losses be prevented? He studies the neurological aspects of muscle weakness and performance, or how the brain controls our muscles.

In this project Clark investigates muscle weakness related to aging and disuse. He utilizes transcranial magnetic stimulation, a non-invasive method of exciting neurons in the brain, to assess the excitability of the part of the brain that controls our limb muscles.

“Aging-related muscle weakness limits independence and contributes to the development of age-related disabilities,” Clark said. “We hope to better understand the physiology behind loss of muscle strength, in order to contribute to the development of better treatments and rehabilitation methods that promote healthy muscle function.”

The grant will help cover the cost of three faculty salaries at Ohio University, and one or two

full-time research technicians for three years. The research will take place in the Institute for Neuromusculoskeletal Research at Ohio University. Clark will work with two faculty co-investigators, James Thomas and David Russ, from the Ohio University School of Physical Therapy.

“This is an important award for Dr. Clark and for OU-COM,” said OU-COM Dean Jack Brose, D.O. “Dr. Clark’s achievement reflects a strong college effort to increase NIH research funding. His award marks the fifth grant received by our faculty as a result of federal stimulus (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds. I am very proud of the outstanding research conducted by Dr. Clark and his colleagues in the Institute for Neuromusculoskeletal Research.”

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